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ABSTRACT

The 1927 Radio Act established the foundation for broadcast regulation in the United States. This paper examines the politics of the debate at the 69th Congress and gives a chronological outline of major dates and events which set the overall perspective. The Federal Radio Commission, which was created as a result of a political deal, was one of the early regulatory boards established by Congress and marks the increasing reliance of Congress on such agencies. The issues of the 1927 debates are still being discussed today, principally those of monopoly and political censorship. The governing standard of the public interest, convenience and necessity is applied to all rulings and recommendations from the Federal Communications Commission. This standard is a reemphasis of the proclamation of the 1927 Radio Act. It is concluded that today's governing standards in broadcasting were established by the people and the politics of the 69th Congress. (TS)

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THE 1927 RADIO ACT: PEOPLE AND POLITICS

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THE 1927 RADIO ACT: PEOPLE AND POLITICS

by

Donald G. Godfrey

The 1927 Radio Act established the foundation for broadcast regulation in the United States. Its basic principles have stood the test of time to become the governing force of today's modern communications. The story behind the development and passage of this legislation is a story of people and politics engaged in a legislative struggle to achieve maximum public benefits from a rapidly developing new industry. Between 1921 and 1926, numerous proposals were presented to the Congress and all were defeated. Secretary Hoover declared that legislators were "overburdened with more urgent work, and they didn't want to take up such a complex subject. . ."[1]

Finally, however, during the 2nd Session of the 69th Congress, legislators passed radio legislation only when misuse of the ether threatened this natural resource.

Broadcast historians, in discussing the development and passage of the Radio Act, see significance in the broadcasting environment which fostered a demand for legislation. Such emphasis overshadows the people and politics, which is revealed through careful study of the legislative debates. An examination of the debate between November, 1925, and February, 1927, shows the people and a number of political maneuvers and compromises that were influential in passage of the legislation.

These did not go completely unnoticed by observers outside Congress at the time. Radio Broadcast, in urging passage of the Act and criticizing Congress, claimed that the citizenry was "being auctioned in a game of politics,"[2] and

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[1] Herbert Hoover, "The Reminiscences of Herbert Clark Hoover," Oral History Project, Columbia University Oral Research Office, p. 10.

[2] "Radio Regulation is the Great Game of Politics," Radio Broadcast, Vol. X, No. 5 (March, 1927), p. 5.

Pendleton E. Herring eight years later declared that passage of the Act "was a result of a political deal and an attempt to prohibit one political appointee from exercising a potentially powerful political weapon."[3]

POLITICAL FIGURES

Broadcasting was still new when legislation was introduced in 1926 and few Congressional representatives understood its complexities. The proposed radio law, H.R. 9971, was lengthy and because of the technical nature of the medium it was also complicated. With little knowledge of the state of regulation, the majority of the legislators initially took no interest in it. Wallace Humphry White, Jr., and Clarence Cleveland Dill led the fight for legislation. Opposition then came mainly from Ewin L. Davis and Key Pittman. These representatives were not well known at the time of the debates. Senators James E. Watson and William E. Borah were the only nationally prominent participants. Although Borah and Watson did not take as active a part in the debates on the floor, their authority was felt in the passage of the legislation.

Wallace Humphry White, Jr., was a major House influence in drafting the legislation. A lawyer by profession, White was a Republican from Lewiston, Maine, and he worked on radio legislation from its inception.[4] After Hoover had called the first Radio Conference, February 27, 1922, it was Representative White who proceeded to draft the proposed legislation from the recommendation of the conferees.[5] During the third conference White participated with Sub-

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[3]Pendleton E. Herring, "Politics and Radio Regulation," Harvard Business Review, Vol. 13, No. 2 (January, 1935), p. 68.

[4]U.S. Congressional Record, Sixty-ninth Congress, First Session, 1926, Vol. 67, Part 3, 42. Cited hereafter as Congressional Record, 1926, 67:3:42.

[5]Erick Barnouw, A Tower in Babel, New York: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 95.

committee No. 3, the Coordinating Committee, which Hoover chaired, and he was Chairman of Subcommittee No. 4, Problems of Marine Communication.[6] During the fourth and final conference, White had the responsibility of chairing Committee No. 9, Copyright Relations to Broadcasting.[7] He was also a member of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee during the radio debate and later became chairman of that committee.

Representative White offered the first radio bill in 1923. It failed, but he hammered away at it until 1927 with subsequent proposals. White advocated control of radio by the Secretary of Commerce and his legislation was initially supported by the industry. He was also an outspoken advocate of the public's rights in broadcasting:

> We have reached the definite conclusion that the right of our people to enjoy this means of communication can be preserved only by the repudiation of the idea underlying the 1912 law that anyone who will may transmit and by the assertion in its stead of the doctrine that the right of the public to service is superior to the right of any individual to use the ether.[8]

White was a member of the House of Representatives from 1917-1931 and the Republican Senator from Maine from 1931-1949.[9] Representative Larsen, commenting on White's contribution to radio legislation, says:

> The gentleman from Maine, Mr. White, in my judgment, deserves a great deal of credit. He knows more about his legislation, I believe, than any other man at either end of the Capitol. (applause) He has worked on it almost continuously for three years and has worked intelligently, honestly, and sincerely.10

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[6] Third National Radio Conference. Proceeding and Recommendations for Radio Legislation, October 6-10, 1924, p. 11. Cited hereafter as Third National Radio Conference, 1924.

[7] Fourth National Radio Conference, 1925, III.

[8] Head, p. 160. See also U.S. Federal Communications Commission, Robert T. Bartley Memo No. 1336 (January 29, 1954).

[9] Wallace H. White, "A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress" (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress) p. 3. Cited hereafter as White Papers.

[10] Congressional Record, 1926, 67:3:2578.

The 1927 Radio Act, as it wound its way through Congress, was known as the White Radio Bill.

Representative White was not noted as a legislative debator. However, "his earnestness and his knowledge was such . . . (that he) was a persuasive man."[11] Later in his Senate career he was known as a "quiet backstage negotiator..."[12] These talents were not always apparent in the cursory reading of the radio debates as White took an active part in defending the legislation on the House Floor.[13] However, as the second session approached and a compromise with the Senate became necessary, he acquired the support of Secretary Hoover and the signature of President Coolidge in achieving final passage of the compromised proposal.[14] By 1947 he was described as one of the top Republican Senators.[15, 16]

Clarence Cleveland Dill was the major Senate influence in drafting radio legislation. Dill was a democrat from Spokane, Washington. Born in Fredericktown, Ohio, Dill was a lawyer, teacher, newspaper reporter and politician. He worked as a reporter in Cleveland and Dubuque before moving to Spokane in 1908. There he taught school until he was admitted to the Washington State Bar in 1910, following which he became active in both his law practice and state politics before being elected to Congress.[17]

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[11] Donald G. Godfrey's interview with Clarence C. Dill, March 7, 1975. Cited hereafter as Godfrey Interview of C.C. Dill, 1975.

[12] "Ex-Senator White of Maine was 74," The New York Times, April 1, 1952, 29:3.

[13] Congressional Record, 1926, 67:3:2578.

[14] Godfrey interview of C.C. Dill, 1975.

[15] "GOP Top Ten" Newsweek, Vol. 29, No. 3 (January 13, 1947) 20.

[16] "Big 8 of the 80th", Senior Scholastic, Vol. 50, No. 1 (February 3, 1917).

[17] Lloyd Spencer and Lancaster Pollard, A History of the State of Washington, Vol. IV (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1934), p. 443.

Dill, as co-author of the legislation, was a relative latecomer to the business of radio as compared to Representative White. This fact explains why Dill's participation in the development of the Act is often given a lower profile by broadcast historians. He had been drawn into the fight for legislation by accident when friends asked him to propose a small amendment to the copyright act that would protect broadcasters from the American Association of Composers, Authors and Publishers. He did so and was immediately the recipient of a request for assistance in establishing radio legislation.[18]

His initiation may have been by chance but his activities beyond that were deliberate. He was ambitious, he knew protocal, and he established himself early as the only radio expert in the Senate.

> . . . he did one thing that in this day and age, gives a man a stranglehold on his job. He became a specialist. And a specialist in a field so new, so complicated and so interwoven with technicalities of speech and function that there were none to dispute him.[19]

As Dill himself describes it, "I was the one-eyed man among the blind."[20] Senator Dill had not participated in any of the Hoover conferences, but this did not hamper his participation in the debate and development of the bill. He modified Representative White's proposals by replacing Secretary Hoover with a proposed Radio Commission and fough diligently for passage of the amended bill.

Dill's knowledge of politics and Senate protocol was important to the bill. Relatively new in the Senate, he still had "..as keen a scent for the shifting political winds as any of his side of the aisle."[21] Although the least well known of the "Sons of the Wild Jackass," Dill was a progressive. He proudly

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[18] C.C. Dill, Where Water Falls, 106-108.

[19] Senator Dill--Radio Authority of Congress," United States News, May 21, 1943, 10.

[20] Carney's interview of C.C. Dill, 1964, 18.

[21] Ray Tucker and Frederick R. Barkley, Sons of the Wild Jackass, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1932, p. 246.

associated himself with the powerful progressive leaders, Borah, Johnson, LaFollette, and Wheeler. From this association, and particularly from the introduction of Borah's radio bill during the first session, Dill gained strong leadership support. The Borah Radio Bill was never brought to the floor for discussion nor did Borah make any significant defenses of its provisions, but it served to shift Dills proposals into the forefront of consideration and gave the Dill Bill the apparent support of Senator Borah.

While Dill and White were both backstage negoitators, Dill was also a debater. His campaign literature described his youthful interest in speaking.

> As a boy he liked to recite and deliver orations. He would walk miles to listen to lectures and to attend meetings where there was speaking of any kind. His greatest delight was to take part in school debates.[22]

This talent extended into the Senate debate on radio legislation. He was described by Time as a distinguished speaker who had a "brightly intelligent if not deeply intellectual" mind.[23] The individual talents of Senator Dill, as a debater, and Representative White as a negotiator, complemented one another on the passage of the important radio legislation.

The Honorable Ewin Lamar Davis from Tennessee's fifth Congressional District constituted the only substantial opposition in the House.[24,25,26] Davis

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[22] Rosalie Jones Dill, "Five Ages of a Senator," Politics and Government Candidates. University of Washington Library Special Collection Files, Campaign Pamphlet, undated.

[23] "Letters" Time, January 6, 1930.

[24] Stanley H. Williamson, (ed.) Who's Who in the Nation's Capitol, 1934-35. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926) p. 112.

[25] Ewin Lamar Davis, The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol, XXXVI, (New York: James T. White and Co.) p. 506-507.

[26] U.S., Congressional Directory, Sixty-ninth Congress Session December 6, 1926, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), p. 112. Cited hereafter as Congressional Directory.

was an active lawyer and Democrat from Talluahoma. He was a minority member of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and therefore knowledgeable as to the details of the proposed radio bill. Actively involved with the Federal Trade Commission, he derived much of the material for his fight against broadcast monopoly from these early FTC hearings.

Ewin Davis was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, and served from the Sixty-sixth to the Seventy-second Congress. Davis was concerned with the radio monopoly developing in the country, unequal distribution of the radio signals and the adoption of a permanent commission for the control and regulation of broadcasting. He rejected the final bill because he believed the monopoly provisions inadequate. However, his insistence during the House debate that a permanent commission be established, had a definite influence in the Senate and the conference. Both proposed the same provision, which was approved in this final bill.

Nevada's Key Pittman provided the major opposition in the Senate. He may once have been known as the third Senator from Washington,[27] but in the fight for radio legislation this conferred no allegiance to Senator Dill. Born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, he was a lawyer by trade and moved throughout Washington and Alaska before settling in Tonopah, Nevada. His Alaskan mining affairs continued with him in his move to Nevada and even into the Senate, where he was known as "Silver Key" because of the silver legislation which was his continual concern.

Pittman was an orator and a person of brilliant magnetism; ". . . to the outsider, he is "Silver Key" because of legislation . . . but to those who know him well, the title seems to fit him personally as well as politically."[28] His stories of the Alaskan frontier gained him a great reputation as a raconteur in

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27 "Senator Pittman Practiced Law In Seattle in '90's," The Seattle Times, May 20, 1928.

28 Francis Parkinson Keyes, "Silver Key Pittman of Nevada," Sunset, May 1935, 16.

in the Senate. "The most people know him from his services in Congress . . . his grasp of national affairs and his gift for clear concise statement . . ."[29] Pittman was a leading Democrat in the Senate, the ranking minority member of both the Interstate Commerce Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the radio debates. Later he succeeded Senator William E. Borah as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. His major opposition to radio legislation was the inherent weaknesses he felt it contained in relation to the monopoly. Those concerns he expressed by pointing out a number of inadequacies in the bill. In the final session he attempted to have it sent back to conference.

The political figures in the radio debates cannot be discussed without mention of Idaho's William E. Borah, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Indiana's James E. Watson, Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Both of these powerful Senators had an influence on the legislation, yet neither took a significantly active part in the debates. Borah and the Senate Progressives felt that the possible control of radio by the Secretary of Commerce would not lead to the most efficient control of monopolies. Borah's support during the first session of the debate was thus given to Dill's proposed permanent commission, which both felt would establish political freedom and monopoly control. Political backing from such a powerful leader as Borah gave the radio question new importance.

Senator Watson and his committee sponsored the Dill Dill. Throughout the Senate debate and notably during the interim conference and second sessions, Watson backed Dill's efforts. Watson was strongly motivated by his feelings that Secretary Hoover should not have control of broadcasting. As both Hoover and Watson had Presidential aspirations, this was politically understandable.

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29 "Senator Pittman Practiced Law In Seattle '90's," The Seattle Times, May 20, 1938.

"Even the suggestion of chaining such a force to the bidding of a political competitor would cause a look of horror to overspread his (Watson's) usually placed face."[30]

CHRONOLOGY

Before discussion of the politics of the debate, a chronological outline of major dates and events will set the overall perspective. The Fourth Radio Conference was called by Secretary Hoover November 9 through 11, 1925. This preceded the opening of the First Session of the Sixty-ninth Congress on December 7, 1925. Following the early introduction of several radio bills which never made it to the floor for debate, Representative White submitted H.R. 9971 to the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries on March 3, 1926. This was the House Committee considering radio-regulation legislation. The White Bill was brought to the floor of the House for a vote and passed on March 15. The Senate version of the same bill was introduced by Senator Clarence C. Dill and referred to the Interstate Commerce Committee on March 16. After lengthy debate, the Senate passed the Dill Bill on July 2. There were major discrepancies between the Senate and House versions, so conferees were appointed from both Houses to work out an agreement. But the first session of Congress adjourned hours after the conferees were appointed, so there was not sufficient time to work out a compromise, and the bill was left in Conference Committee. Five days following Congressional adjournment on July 8, acting Attorney General William J. Donovan issued the opinion that Secretary Hoover was powerless and there was no regulatory power over the broadcast chaos. Thus the serious need for regulation became immediately apparent. The conferees met between sessions, and following the opening of the

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[30] Thomas Stevenson, "Who is to Control Broadcasting, Radio Broadcast, Vol. IX, No. 6, (October, 1926), pp. 572-574.

second session introduced the bill to the House on January 27, 1927, and to the Senate on January 31. The House passed it on January 29. The Senate approved it on February 18. President Coolidge signed it February 23.

THE POLITICS

Clarence Dill as co-author of the bill introduced it into the Senate on March 16, 1926. Politics began with the early attempts in the Senate to call up the proposed radio law for consideration. Dill took the lead in these efforts until April 13 when Senator Borah introduced his bill. It was substantially the same as the Dill Bill, but emphasized the proposed commission and suggested tougher restraints on broadcast monopoly. Borah's bill fostered discussion, a few days later Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas interrupted a Chamber debate on public buildings to stress the theme of too much "executive dictation."[31] Robinson in his remarks was calling for the creation of an independent commission for control of radio. While these two powerful Senate leaders discussed the radio measure, Dill followed their lead, and utilized the time to strengthen his own proposal. Neither Robinson nor Borah were deeply concerned with radio legislation and as their participation diminished, Dill once again asserted leadership.

Following the introduction of the Borah Bill and Senator Robinson's remarks about too much "executive dictation," individual Progressives began debating, outside the Senate Chambers, the political implications of Secretary Hoover's control. Senators Hiram Johnson and Robert M. LaFollette called for an end to the "alleged political discrimination in broadcasting."[32] Although these charges were never made directly against Secretary Hoover, the inference was that political censorship was being exercised in Hoover's favor because at the time he was

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[31] Congressional Record, 1926, 67:8:3357.

[32] "Reports Bill to End Hoover Radio Power," The New York Times, May 7, 1926, 21:1.

the broadcasters' licensing authority. The charge affirmed:

> That the efforts to broadcast in Des Moines by Senator LaFollette and Senator Johnson in Detroit were frustrated under peculiar circumstances. In both cases . . . the connections were so arranged that few places heard the speakers. 33

The implication was that the stations were discriminating against the politics of the Senators and such discrimination should be controlled. Whether or not the charges were actually aimed at Secretary Hoover cannot be determined. But censorship of any kind from Hoover or the broadcasters was not going to be permitted.

Dill's sensitivity to 'shifting political winds' was illustrated throughout the first session, for he was quick to yield radio debate to the consideration of other issues, such as the Farm Relief Bill being discussed on June 26. Dill knew that some Senators felt there were more pressing problems confronting the legislators, 1926 being an election year. This yielding appeased members of the Senate. It also cut down on the time that was given to the consideration of radio legislation, increased the pressure for passage and cut off discussion that might have delayed the bill. Such was the cast at the end of the first session when Senator Borah introduced an amendment to give the Commission authority to enforce anti-trust regulations shou[illegible]g business expand further into radio.

The divisions in the first session of the debate were not drawn along party lines, but they can be focused around political arguments. The Senate's desire was to have a permanent bi-partisan commission as opposed to the House's desire for regualtion by the Secretary of Commerce. It was agreed that while the Secretary had done a remarkable job, he still was a political appointee of the President -- a president who had recently asked for the resignations of several

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33"Reports Bill to End Hoover Radio Power," The New York Times, May 7, 1926, 21:1.

members of the Shipping Board because they would not conform to his wishes. Then, too, Secretary Hoover was himself a possible Presidential candidate. It was feared that if Hoover ran for President he would have as supporters every radio station which desired renewal of its license. The Senate legislators were not willing to give anyone this political weapon. Senator Dill reported July 3, that this was the vital difference between the Senate and House bills and the major stumbling block to passage during the first session of Congress.[34]

The Radio Bill failed to pass during the first session of the 69th Congress because of a political difference between the House and Senate, consequently, conference committees were appointed to work out a compromise versions of the bill. The political make-up of the Committees gave a slight edge to the proponents of the Dill Bill. Representatives White, Frederick R. Lehlback, Frank D. Scott, Ladislas Lazaro and Davis made up the House Conference Committee. The Senate Conference Committee was composed of Senators Watson, Frank P. Gooding and Dill, Senator Gooding replacing Senator Albert Baird Cummins, who was the original appointee.[35] A majority of two Senators and three Representatives was required for conference passage of the compromise. Senators Watson and Dill made up the majority from the Senate. The change from Senator Cummins to Senator Gooding made little difference; however, Senator Gooding did vote with Senator Dill on every major question concerning the legislation, so it can be assumed he voted with Dill during this conference. Since Representative Davis argued in the House for the Senate version of the bill, creating the commission, only two more House votes were needed to reach an agreement.[36]

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34 Congressional Record, 1926, 67:I:12959.

35 "Expect New Conferee on Radio Control." The New York Times, October 19, 1926. IX, 19:3.

36 "Who Shall Control Radio Is Problem Facing Congress," The New York Times, December 12, 1926, IX, 21:1,2.

Between the sessions of Congress, the White House held at least two conferences with the House conferees. On December 2, 1926, President Coolidge met with Republican Representatives Scott, White, and Lehlback and on January 15, 1927, just before the untroduction of the bill into the House, the President met with Secretary Hoover and Representatives White and Lehlback. Representative Davis was notably absent from both of these meetings, an absence that could be attributed to party politics, but he was also an outspoken opponent of the White Radio Bill.

During the Senate-House Conference, Dill achieved an important political victory. He convinced Representative White that a commission should be established to function for one year. White accepted this as a temporary solution which would be satisfactory to the House, and, as an emergency measure, even to Secretary Hoover. (It should be remembered that the House was insisting on Hoover's control and the Senate supported the commission.) But after the compromise, Dill reported to the Senate that it would be impossible for the commission to finish its work in one year.

> ...if I believed that the commission would not have complete control of the situation not only in the first year, but continuously thereafter, I would be the first to help kill the conference report.[37]

He was convinced that after the commission had been functioning for one year it would be allowed to continue. "I knew if we ever got a commission, we would never get rid of it."[38] Thus, as the result of a political compromise, Dill made permanent the commission which has been in control of radio broadcasting since the passage of the Radio Act.

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[37] Congressional Record, 1927, 68:3:3031.

[38] Carney interview of C.C. Dill, 1964, p. 9-10.

The successful passage of the Radio Act during the second session was the result of, first, the Congressional education received during the earlier session and, second, the new emphasis on the compromise standard of "public interest, convenience and necessity." These two factors coupled with the increasing public pressure for the bill assured its passage. The debates during the first session were educational in nature. Congressmen White, Davis and Dill were the only experts. Virtually no one else knew anything about radio and radio legislation. Fredrick and Sternberg describe the Bill's history as:

> "...a fine illustration of legislative confusion and wrangling. This was owning in part...to the difficulty of legislating for a rapidly changing medium and to the ignorance of all but a few Congressmen concerned the technicalities involved.[39] (emphasis added)

The oratory was clearly aimed toward the education of such legislators. During the introduction of the bill in both Houses, long explanations were made covering the history of broadcasting, the necessity of legislation and the proposed bill.

During the first session, legislators were given a basic knowledge of the bill and the issues involved. During the second session they were asked to act on limited knowledge. The new emphasis on "public interest, convenience and necissity," was also persuasively significant. The phrase was general enough to be interpreted favorably by the majority of legislators and by the industry as well. "The underlying theory is...perfectly sound; only an indefinite and very elastic standard should be prescribed for the regulation..."[40] The new standard could be interpreted to affirm public ownership of the airwaves, regulate

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[39] Carl J. Fredrick and Evelyn Sternberg, "Congress and the Control of Radio Broadcasting," in Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio, Harry J. Skornia and Jack William Kitson (eds.), Palo Alto, California: Pacificia Books Publishers, 1968, p. 9.

[40] Louis G. Cadwell, "The Standard of Public Interest, Convenience or Necessity as used in the Radio Act." Air Law Review, Vol. I., No. 3 (July, 1930), p. 296.

monopoly and curtail political censorship. This calmed the fears of the legislators and coupled with outside pressures from the industry, the citizenry and resulting letters, telegrams and petitions assured action from Congress.

Despite its imperfections, Congressmen were willing to pass the bill on the basis of the affirmative education, feeling that it was better than no legislation at all. If Dill, White and proponents of the bill had not educated Congress to the importance of the legislation, the vote might have gone with Senator Key Pittman, who urged strongly that it be sent back to conference for refinement of its shortcomings. The legislators, however, were now aware of the general technicalities, acutely aware of the importance of the legislation, and consequently voted for passage.

CONCLUSION

The 1927 Radio debates stimulated only limited speculation as to the future of commercial broadcasting. Talk of broadcasters having remote control of submarines and railroads through the high powered 500 watt commercials stations, and Hoover's proclamation that broadcasting "would die in twenty-four hours if it were limited to transmission of phonograph records,"[41] seems almost humerous now. The technicalities of today's industry are more clearly understood, but the legacy of the Act created by the people and politics continues. First, the Federal Radio Commission, which was created as a result of a political deal, was one of the early regulatory boards established by Congress and marks the increasing reliance of Congress on such agencies. Second, the issues of the 1927 debates are still being discussed today, principally those of monopoly and political censor-

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[41] Third National Radio Conference, 1924, 3.

ship. Third, the governing standard of the public interest, convenience and necessity is applied to all rulings and recommendations from the Federal Communications Commission. This standard is a reemphasis of the proclamation of the 1927 Radio Act. Finally, the people who urged this Act through Congress are also part of the legacy. Today, names and faces have changed, but individual influence is still prominent.[42]

Today's governing standards in broadcasting were established by the people and the politics of the 69th Congress. Understanding these political influences in the Act provides insight into the development of broadcast regulation. True, the urgency and pressures were a major impetus in the passage of this law, but people and politics were also significant. It was the 1927 Radio Act that established the basis for broadcast regulation. This Act truly can be called the "Magna Carta" of broadcasting.[43]

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[42] Erwin G. Krasnow and Lawrence D. Longley. The Politics of Broadcast Regulation, New York: St. Martins Press, 1973, p. 53-54.

[43] "Radio Bill Called Air 'Magna Carta'", The New York Times, February 20, 1927, 17:4-7.